

“This current water shortage is having a devastating effect for our farmers and farm-workers, and as a result, everyone living in the Valley,” said Costa. “A recent study commissioned by the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority makes this clear. The study found that the estimated production losses for Westlands Water District Alone would translate into a \$65.9 million reduction in regional economic output and an estimated 567 lost jobs.”

Costa's district includes three of the top agriculture producing counties in the country, and agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley is a \$20 billion industry accounting for almost 40% of the Valley's employment. The Subcommittee heard directly from farmers and community leaders how the drought will affect their industry and their cities.

“If we want to have a safe and reliable food supply here in the United States, we need to support and protect our farmers and their needs - particularly in established and highly productive areas of our country, such as the San Joaquin Valley,” said Costa.

Much of California's water infrastructure was built when the state's population was just 20 million people. Today, the state has a population of about 37 million people, and is projected to be at 47 million people in 2030. The Valley is currently one of the fastest growing regions of the state.

“I believe we are on course for a water crisis that will mirror all too well the energy crisis that we are currently facing,” added Costa. “Government has delayed for too long. We need to fix the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, using good science that takes into account all of the factors affecting the health of that ecosystem. We also need to increase our water storage capacity, improve conveyance, and give greater flexibility to state and federal agencies to respond to water shortages.”

“This is not an issue just for our Valley, but for our nation as a whole, and we must act now to ensure our future success.”